

DEATH and the LADY; or, The Great Messenger of Mortality.



DEATH.

*FAIR lady, lay your costly robes aside,
No longer may you glory in your pride,
Take leave of all your carnal vain delight,
I'm come to summon you away to night.*

LADY.

*What bold attempt is this, pray let me know
From whence you come, and whither I must go?
Shall I, who am a lady, stoop or bow
To such a pale-fac'd visage, Who art thou?*

DEATH.

*Do you not know me? Well, I'll tell you then,
Tis I that conquer all the sons of men,
No pitch of honour from my dart is free,
My name is DEATH, have you not heard of me?*

LADY.

*Yes, I have heard of thee time after time,
But being in the glory of my prime,
I did not think you would have called so soon,
Why must my morning sun go down at noon?*

DEATH.

*Talk not of noon, you may as well be mute,
This is no time at all for to dispute,
Your riches, jewels, gold, and garments brave,
Your houses and lands, must all new masters have,
Though they by age are full of grief and pain,
At their appointed time they must remain.*

LADY.

*My heart is cold, I tremble at the news,
Here's bags of gold if thou wilt me excuse,
And seize on those, thus finish thou the strife,
On such as are weary of their life;
Are there not many bound in prison strong,
In bitter grief of soul have languish'd long,
From all would find a grave a place of rest,
From all their grief in which they are oppress'd;
Besides, there's many with their hoary heads
And palsy joints, by which their joys are fled.*

DEATH.

*Though thy vain heart to riches was inclin'd,
Yet thou must die and leave them all behind,
I come to none before my warrant's seal'd,
And when it is they must submit and yield;
I take no bribe, believe me, this is true,
Prepare yourself to go, I'm come for you.*

LADY.

*Death, be not so severe, let me obtain
A little longer time to live and reign;
Fain would I stay, if thou my life wilt spare,
I have a daughter beautiful and fair,
I'd live to see her wed, whom I adore,
Grant me but this and I will ask no more.*

DEATH.

*This is a slender frivolous excuse,
I have you fast and will not let you loose,
Leave her to Providence, for you must go
Along with me, whether you will or no;
I, Death, command kings to leave their crowns
And at my feet they lay their sceptres down,
If unto kings this favor I not give,
But cut them off, can you expect to live
Beyond the limit of your time and space?
No, I must send you to another place.*

LADY.

*You learned doctors now express your skill,
And let not Death of me obtain his will,
Prepare your cordials, let me comfort find,
And gold shall fly like chaff before the wind.*

DEATH.

*Forbear to call their skill will never do
They are but mortals here as well as you,
I give the fatal wound, my dart is sure,
Tis far beyond the doctor's skill to cure;
How freely can you let your riches fly
To purchase death, rather than yield to die,
But while you flourish'd here in all your state
You would not give one penny to the poor,
Tho' in God's name their suit to you did pour,
You would not spare one penny for his sake;
My Lord beheld wherein you did amiss,
And calls you hence to give account for this.*

LADY.

*Oh, heavy news! must I no longer stay?
How shall I stand in the great judgment day?
Down from her eyes the crystal tears did flow,
She said, "None knows what I do undergo
Upon a bed of sorrow here I lie,
My carnal life makes me afraid to die;
My sins, alas! are many, gross and foul,
Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on my soul;
And though I do deserve thy righteous
Yet pardon, Lord, and send a blessing down."
Then with a dying sigh her heart did break,
And did the pleasures of this world forsake
Thus may we see the high and mighty Jan,
For cruel Death shows no respect at all
To any one of high or low degree,
Great men submit to death as well as we;
Though they are gay, their lives are but a span,
A lump of clay—so vile a creature's man;
Then happy those whom Christ hath made his own,
Die in the Lord and they blessed are.*

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